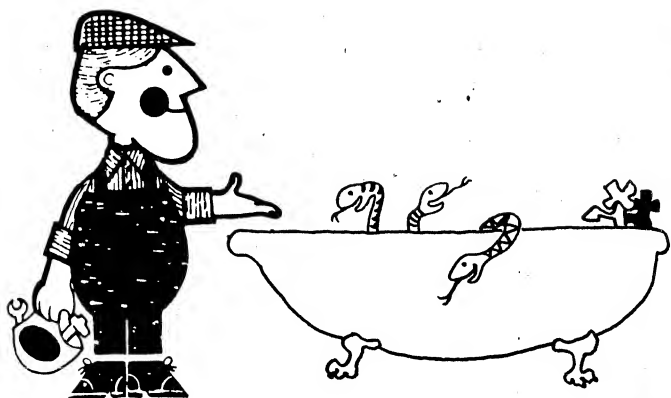
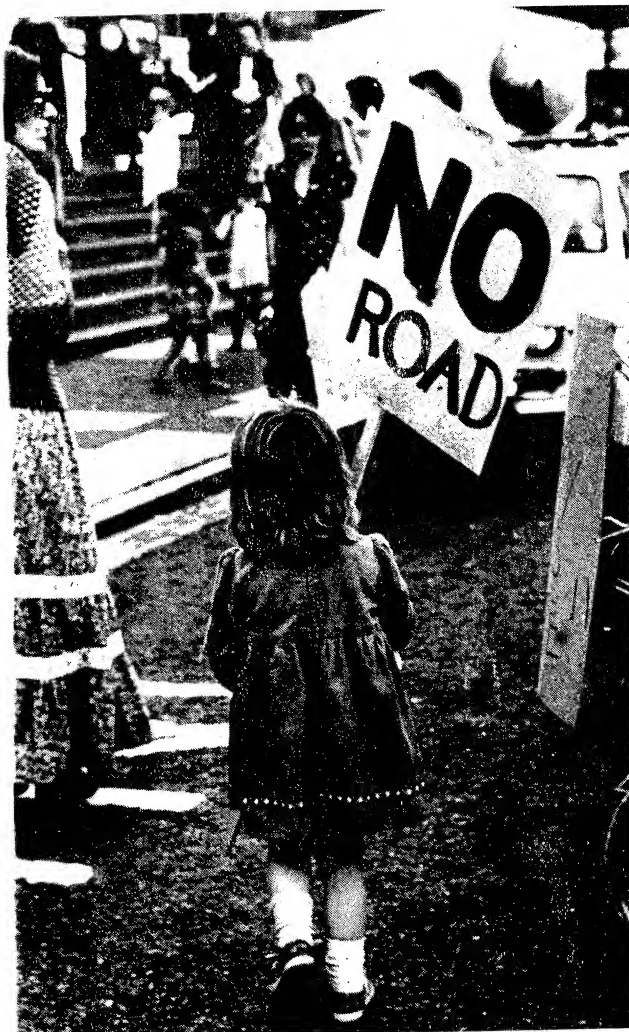


# HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

July no.18 5p



**COUNCIL REPAIRS:** A survey of two Hackney estates and what the authorities say they should be doing. See pages 8 and 9.



**THE ROAD STOPPED:** Hackney Council has voted against building a new road through the borough. But what happens next? Page 3.

## INSIDE

Hoxton Hall - Hoxton's community centre.....  
.....page 2.

Barbould Road - cheaper to stop the bulldozers.....page 4.

Health on the cheap - Hackney's decaying hospitals..page 5.

Hackney Women's Aid/ the fight against the Abortion Bill...  
.....pages 6 and 7.

INFORMATION pages 14 and 15.



**NURSES' VICTORY:** Supporters of the nursery nurses' campaign march through the streets of Hackney last month on their way to a rally on the steps of the Town Hall. Amongst the marchers were local teachers and trades unionists. Details page 7.

# HOXTON HALL

HOXTON HALL FRIENDS NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE  
128a Hoxton Street, N.1. (739 5431)

Hoxton Hall has provided Hoxton with a social, educational and cultural approach to community needs for 80 years. Its activities are open to all, and the policy of the centre has always been directed towards involving families.

## PAST

After it was built, by James Mortimer in 1863, the hall was used as a music hall, and changed hands rapidly until 1866 when it became McDonalds Music Hall. In 1871 McDonalds closed and the hall lay empty until 1878 when it was bought by the Blue Ribbon Army as a base for their campaign against the evils of drink.

In 1895 ownership passed to the Bedford Institute Association - a London-based Quaker charity - and in 1910 they added new premises alongside the theatre. The building, which is still owned by the Bedford Institute, is listed as being of architectural and historical interest.

In the early years the Bedford Institute's work at Hoxton Hall centred round mission meetings, Sunday school and general relief work. However, new ideas were constantly being introduced and at the turn of the century the theatre was brought back into use for regular entertainments designed to encourage local people to sign the pledge. During the

early 1900s a brass band was started, a branch of the Workers Educational Association opened and free legal advice was given.

Other changes followed. In the 1920s a wireless club was started and a pensioners social club formed. Local people were encouraged to participate in plays. During the war the basement served as an air raid shelter for 350 people. It was at this time that May Scott first came to the centre and she ran it for the next 30 years. Much of the present work

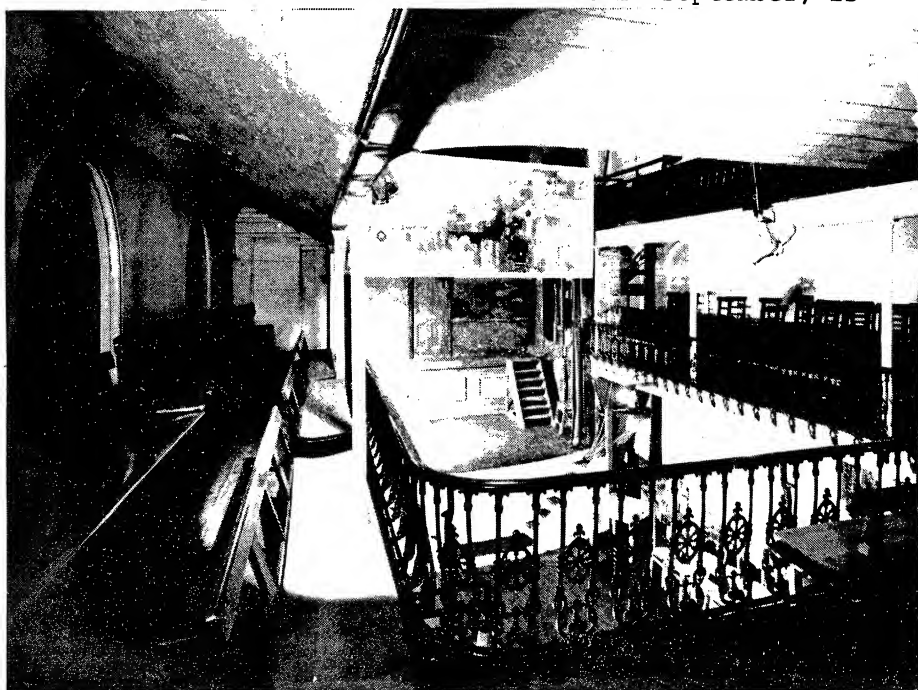
was built up by her. She retired only last year, being replaced by Terence Goodfellow.

## PRESENT

The present activities are varied and cover all age groups. An under-fives playgroup, a playclub for primary school kids, a teenagers club recreational classes for teenagers and adults, lunch club and social club for pensioners - these are the regular things. The centre is also used by local groups for meetings, conferences, and during the school holidays for children's projects. This summer there will be painting, games, drama, pottery, crafts, trips to the country, outings, and during the last week professional theatre groups will work with and perform for, the children.

Two new projects, both funded by charitable trusts, are carrying on Hoxton Hall's tradition of experimenting. Prodigal Trust run a School's Video Project in 4 local schools - Shoreditch, Daneford, Haggerston and Edith Cavell. The project involves training selected groups of remedial stream children to operate video equipment and make their own TV programmes.

The other project, due to start in September, is



The Interior of the Music Hall Theatre

Nevern Square's Community Theatre and Education project. Six full-time workers will work with local educational establishments and community groups on drama projects. The group will also encourage local children, teenagers and adults to participate in theatre work.

## FUTURE

Plans to restore the music hall theatre are well under way. Hackney Borough Council have given £10,000 towards the restoration work. Over the last 6 months there has been a great increase in the arts events staged. Twenty six different shows, films, etc. have been put on and about 3,000 people have come.

Shoreditch has a rich theatrical past. The first ever London theatre was situated near Curtain Road and next year sees its 400th anniversary. Shakespeare's first 15 or so plays were performed in Shoreditch and this fact was marked by the formation of a Shakespeare in Shoreditch Society. This society has helped mount many Shakespearian productions. Shoreditch was also one of the great centres of Victorian theatre and Nevern Square theatre group's latest production, "A Twopenny Tragedy", is based round a night at the Victorian theatre.

Hoxton Hall is meant to be a resource for the community, and we are always willing to consider possible use of space by local groups whose ideas are in sympathy with ours. We also recognise the need for links with other community groups in the borough and hope that people will get in touch with us. The workers at Hoxton Hall are:

Terry Goodfellow (Warden/  
Senior Community Worker)

Jan Evans (Assistant Warden/  
Youth Worker)

Barclay Price (Theatre/  
Administration)

# STOP THE ROAD 3

On Wednesday June 25th, Hackney Council made its decision over the proposed new road from Hackney Wick to Dalston. The result was an overwhelming rejection 'because of the disruption it would cause to the borough.' However, the Council supported the plan for a Chelsea-Hackney underground line and recommended a plan of road improvements, better public transport and limiting through traffic to solve Hackney's traffic problems.

The Council has, in effect, accepted the first five points of the Six Point Plan, but rejected the sixth, which was the new road. Although at first the Council said that the whole Plan must be accepted or turned down as a whole, it has now rejected the one part that would bring no benefits to Hackney.

This decision accepts that lorries and roads take second place to local residents. But it is not a victory. Only when the Greater London Council has in its turn rejected the Plan and removed the 'safeguarding' from the line of the road will the borough be safe from this road menace.

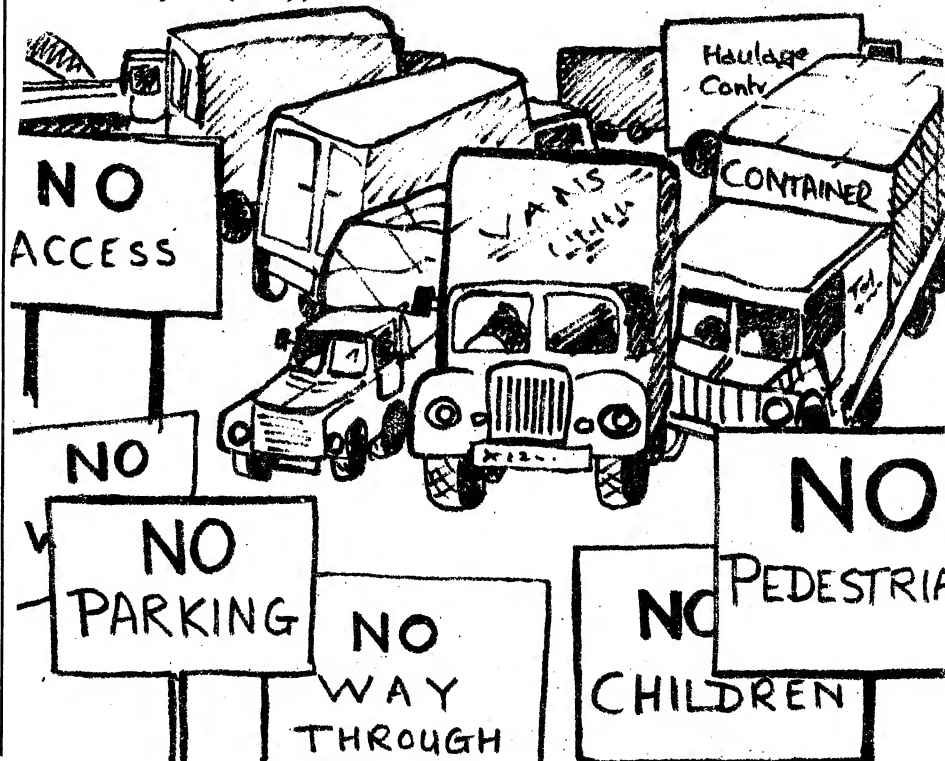
The original Six Point Plan was drawn up by the North East London Project (NELP), which is

made up of officers from the GLC and five boroughs, including Hackney. The Council's decision will be considered alongside reports from the other four. The NELP will then submit its plans to the GLC, who will make the final decision.

Hackney is clearly the borough most affected by the road because it will go right through the middle. But a flat 'no' to the road from Hackney Council doesn't mean that the GLC will reject it. Despite fierce opposition from Haringey Council, the Archway Road widening scheme is still to go ahead. The proposed Wick to Dalston road and the Archway section are both links in route which runs from the M1 motorway to the docks via Highbury Corner. Obviously there is strong pressure to complete this link with fast, wide roads.

The campaign against the road must continue to demand that the GLC reject the road plan and accept that the interests of Hackney people come before those of road transport or car commuters.

Malcolm Kaill (Stop The Road Campaign) tel: 986 8105.



## *Cheaper to stop the bulldozers*

For nearly three years, members of the South Stoke Newington Community Association have been fighting the wish of Hackney Council to knock down houses in their area, and to replace them with new ones. The reason for the fight is that if the houses were to be renovated, instead of being demolished, they could provide the same accommodation in houses every bit as good -- for under half the cost, and in a third of the time. With the present crisis in housing -- over 14,000 people on the housing list -- the quickest and least expensive way of solving at least part of the problem has still been ignored by the Council.

### Preservation Orders

The present situation has developed since the Department of the Environment placed preservation orders on several large villas in Albion Road. The D.O.E. has described these as "of architectural and historical interest". The majority of them are occupied by offices, with light industry in their large back gardens. The Council's original proposal was to demolish these and change the use of the land to residential. This would have meant that a gain in housing was made in the area. With the villas protected, however, only the terraced houses of Barbauld and Sandbrook Roads and Albion Grove were left. These were included in the original development area to give a reasonable size site. If they are developed on their own, no net housing gain will be made. And if the terraced houses were to be converted (with infilling on the existing vacant sites) the same number of places could still be provided as could be obtained from rebuilding completely.

### £2 million saved

The difference in cost has been worked out by various independent Quantity Surveyors. It is nearly £2,000,000 cheaper to do up the existing houses. They are in good

condition: a D.O.E. inspector said: "it is not alleged that they are anything other than fit for habitation, but they lack the basic amenities." (They haven't



all got bathrooms or inside toilets.)

So why knock down these houses to rebuild the same number of places, at over twice the cost, and taking nearly three times as long?

The Council seem stuck on the idea that a housing gain can be made. This is not so any longer, since the land which would have provided the space to increase the number of homes is covered by the preservation orders on its existing buildings.

The Council seem to think that the terraces of Barbauld and Sandbrook Roads and Albion Grove aren't as good as new flats.

There have been several independent surveys that show that if renovated they would be as good, if not better.

The Council hasn't bothered

to compare the cost of doing up the old terraces with that of knocking them down and rebuilding completely.

### Crosland steps in

The whole case is now with Anthony Crosland, the Secretary of State for the Environment. He has asked the Council to meet him and explain their reasons for rebuilding, especially in the light of recent Government directives to renovate where possible, to save time and cost.

Let's hope that the Secretary of State can see the sense in the Community Association's case, because the Council refuses to.

## **INVESTIGATORS HANDBOOK**

A guide for tenants, workers and action groups on how to investigate companies, organisations and individuals. Details hundreds of sources of information and explains where to find it. how to use it. Only 30p (inc post.) from Community Action, P.O.Box 665, London SW1X 8DZ

## **COMMUNITY ACTION**

The magazine for working class tenants and action groups, community projects, trade unionists and activists involved in the struggle. Only 18p (40 pages) or 6 issues for £1.20 (£2 to public bodies, libraries etc) Back issues available. From Community Action, P.O.Box 665, London SW1X 8DZ.



The second part of the Hackney Health Guide, promised in HPP 17, has been held up. Instead, we are printing a criticism of the reorganisation of local hospitals, written by a doctor who has worked in one of them.

## HEALTH ON THE CHEAP

Hackney was, despite appearances, not unfortunate in its choice of hospitals. They were numerous, local and generally good.

However, the administration and top medical men had better ideas. They came up with an idea for a big district hospital on the site of the Eastern Hospital. This was despite the fact that there are few transport facilities to the hospital, not enough money to build it, and nowhere to put the patients, mostly old people, when the place was pulled down.

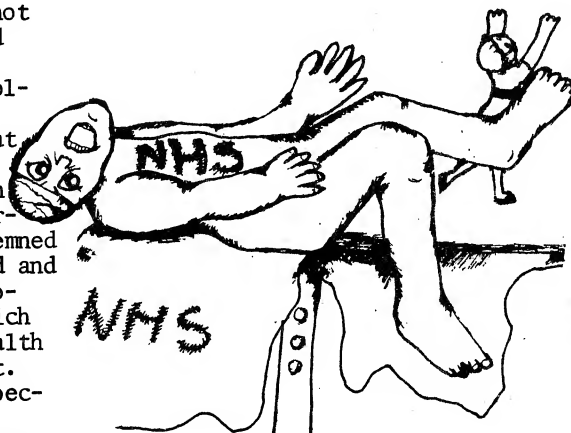
The direct result was that the other Hackney hospitals ceased to have money spent on them. Hackney Hospital's operating theatres, already condemned as a health risk, were closed and replaced by plastic and cardboard operating theatres - which are even now considered a health risk. The medical block in St. Leonards is dilapidated and becoming unworkable.

The idea of a District Hospital has never been officially dropped, but it is well known that the plan will never take place. At last plans have been drawn up to repair the damage that had been allowed to occur. These include rebuilding operating theatres and the casualty unit in Hackney Hospital and remodelling the medical block at St. Leonards, although work on these has yet to begin.

However, bureaucracy marches on. With the plans for the new hospital finished, the men at the top are still trying to close hospitals, still the Eastern and now the Metropolitan. This is under the pretext of 'rationalisation' and 'economy'.

But if the authorities keep to their promise of complete re-employment of workers - whose pay is 75% of the cost of running the hospitals - and of alternative beds for the patients (another 10%), then only 15% of running costs will be saved. Small return for having to rebuild another hospital. In fact, only a small part of the facilities which will need to be replaced have been agreed to by the Health Authority. And with the cuts in government spending any more are unlikely to be agreed to. This means that any closure involves a loss of the services available.

One of the arguments used by those in favour of closing hospitals is that the East End has a high number of hospital beds per head of population. However, this takes into account our two great 'assets' - Barts and the London Hospital. But however convenient it may be for these hospitals to lord it over their respective areas, they in fact do very little for them.



Only 7% of Barts patients are from Hackney. Being a national centre for several diseases, Barts takes its patients from all over the country. Especially the South East. Nevertheless, Barts is taken into account when money is allocated to Hackney, and the cost of running the Metropolitan Hospital disappears in one consultant ordering his equipment for his new piece of research, often with dubious results. Hackney is left with its far greater problems and no money.

## Courses in Art & Design

### Fine Art

This is a three year course which offers varied media options in two and three dimensions. It aims to explore, question and study the tradition, practice and role of the Fine Arts.

### Fashion/Textile

This is a broad based three year course in Fashion & Textile studies which provides direct admission to the licentiateship of the Society of Industrial Artists in either Fashion or Textile Design.

### Communication Design

This is a broad based three year course in communication, designed to give a student both the practical ability and the theoretical understanding to enable him to deal effectively with the wide variety of communication problems found in contemporary society. The course encompasses both the visual and the verbal, and comprises experience in three main media areas:

photography : tv/audio  
typo/graphics

and allows the individual student to develop an eventual bias within these media.

### Entrance requirements for all courses

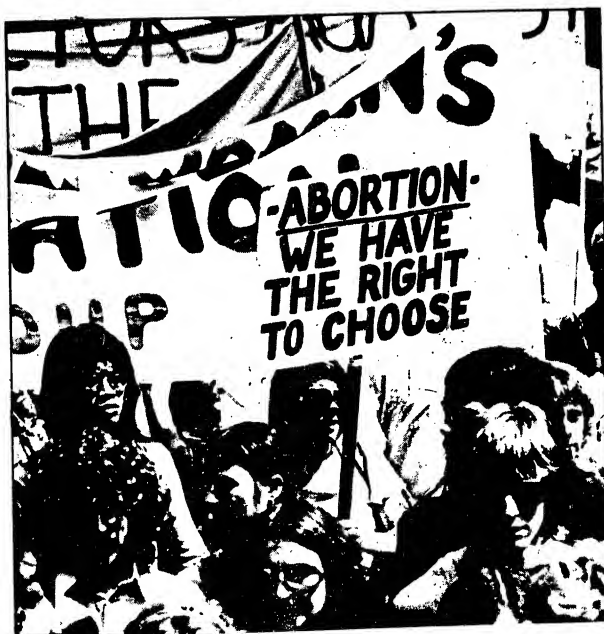
Candidates should normally have 5 GCE 'O' Levels and have completed a Foundation Course. These conditions may exceptionally be relaxed for candidates of talent who seem particularly able to benefit from the course. Further details and an application form may be obtained from:

The Registrar, Ref PR101,  
North East London Polytechnic, FREEPOST/1,  
London, E17 4BR.  
Tel: 01-527 0933

**North East London  
Polytechnic**

# 6 ABORTION :

## the fight goes on



On June 21st. more than 20,000 people gathered in London to demonstrate against the James White Abortion (Amendment) Bill. After the demonstration the Hackney Abortion Campaign gave a party in Centerprise, with two women's bands playing, the Stepney Sisters and the Derelicts, and made £70 to keep the campaign going.

Although it is quite likely that the Abortion (Amendment) Bill will not get through Parliament now, because of the success of the National Abortion Campaign in mobilising against it, it is still important that we carry on fighting against it and ensure that no similar laws will be passed.

In Hackney the 1967 Abortion Act has never been fully implemented. Over 50% of women in Hackney who ask for abortions are referred outside Hackney, most of them to private clinics. Of course there are no figures for the women who are refused outright and have to resort to back street aborti-

onists or bear unwanted children. The Hackney Abortion Campaign will carry on campaigning for the implementation of the 1967 Abortion Act. At the same time we want to broaden the campaign: to collect information on contraception, pregnancy, childbirth, and to produce a pamphlet with a guide to all the facilities in Hackney.

Abortion is not an isolated issue. For women to have the right to choose the alternatives must be real, so we must also be campaigning for nurseries (only 2.2% of children under five in Hackney go to full time Local Authority nurseries, while 66.5% of married women are working), higher supplementary benefits, equal pay etc.

We don't want to lose the impetus we gathered in fighting James White's reactionary Bill. We want to see freely available safe legal abortion in Hackney. Women have the right to choose.

Contact 42, Kynaston Road, N.16  
or ring 986-3075

JOIN THE HACKNEY ABORTION  
CAMPAIGN.



It's really not much fun in a refuge for 'battered wives'. The house is usually overcrowded and shabby; there's no escape from noisy kids and it's difficult to keep the place tidy. For most women who have left home suddenly, it is a great shock to be thrust among so many other families, to have to cope with Social Security and legal aid claims as well as worrying if their husband will discover where they are hiding.

## WOMEN'S AID



Some women cannot take this kind of strain and return to their husbands when they might have stayed if conditions had been better. Those who do stay have to face the long wait for completion of court proceedings and re-housing.

Nevertheless a Women's Aid Centre often provides the only safe place for a family, where a woman can think about her future and get advice about legal proceedings etc. It gives women in similar circumstances a chance to share their problems and sort things out together. Many women, who have previously been isolated in their family units, suddenly realise they are not alone in having violent menfolk. For some women it is their first opportunity to make friends with other women.

There are now eight Women's Aid Centres in London alone. Each Centre is independent and is run differently, although the groups meet together regularly. Some Centres have good facilities, with workers to give advice and support and playleaders to take care of the children's needs. Other Centres rely entirely on volunteers and have to manage with small, dilapidated premises. The crux of these great differences is finance - of the London Women's Aid Centres only those in Tower Hamlets and Hackney are at present without financial support from the local authority and so can only provide the minimum of shelter and support. Here in Hackney we are still hopeful of receiving a council grant to cover the Centre's running costs. If this is not forthcoming our future will be uncertain. At the moment the Centre is run by a handful of volunteers, working in their spare time. Rent paid by the women residents barely covers the electricity and rates bills; renovations and decorating etc. has to wait until we are able to get money from charitable sources.

Women's Aid Centres grew largely out of the wider Women's Movement. They were opened and run by women who realised the need for such a provision. However, there comes a stage when it is right and necessary to ask the authorities to take responsibility for financing such centres in the same way they support other host hostels. This is especially important at the moment when money from charitable sources is fast disappearing. As well as providing temporary shelter we also give refuge to some women and children who would be classed as homeless if we did not exist. This alone means we are saving the council thousands of pounds a year in bed and breakfast charges.

The need for some kind of Women's Aid Centre is self-evident. It would surely be a retrograde step if Hackney Women's Aid Centre, one of the first in the country to open, should have to close through lack of support.

To find out more about Hackney Women's Aid, please phone 534 5492 and ask for Judith Croton.

# NURSERY NURSES WIN

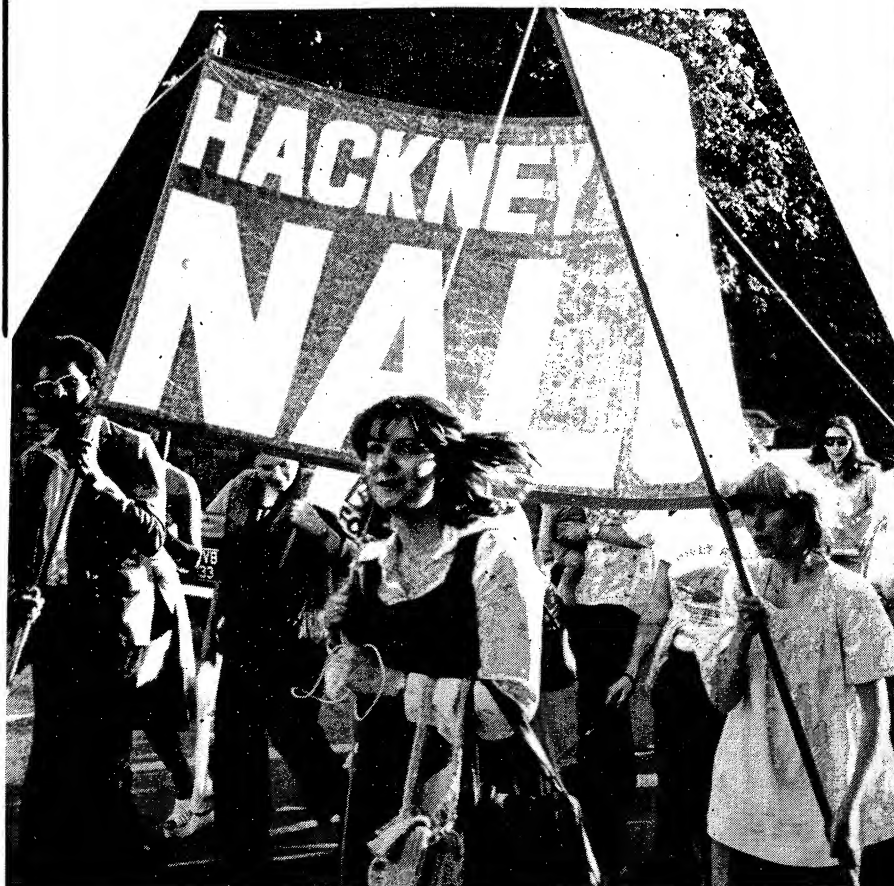
NURSERY NURSES have always been amongst the lowest paid of Council employees: they are women, workers in a 'caring' job, and are not expected to make demands.

A year ago the Council agreed to pay increases to the nurses, but then back-tracked on the agreement. The nurses, with the support of Hackney NALGO and NUPE, took industrial action.

They have now won their demands. The Disputes Committee of the Whitley Council found Hackney Council at fault, and forced them to honour their agreement. There is now disagreement over whether the nursery nurses should have accepted the Council's original proposals, which favoured the lowest-paid workers.

But the nursery nurses voted unanimously in favour of the final proposals, which include a 36-hour week (as opposed to Hackney Council's 40-hour week), and pay backdated to April 1st (instead of June 1st under Hackney's ideas).

The 80 women involved see the campaign as part of the general fight for better nursery facilities in Hackney. There are only 7 day nurseries, and the waiting list at the moment is about 1,000. They are badly understaffed. With better pay and conditions they would be able to get more staff, and this could mean an extra 100 children in the existing nurseries. As they say, it's not the full answer, but it would be a start.



# REPAIRS

## WHO CARRIES THE CAN ?

MOST COUNCIL HOUSING Departments would admit that the standard of their repairs and maintenance service is far from what it ought to be. The problems in a Borough like Hackney with over twenty thousand council houses - many of them built before the last war - are enormous.

Tony Crosland may talk about local councils having a party, but whole over half the rent you pay goes to pay off interest charges on capital loans, few councils have the resources to provide a really good repairs service.

To give you some idea of the sort of money we are talking about here: there are 26,000 council homes in Hackney and if you take a yearly expenditure on each of £50 you end up with an annual bill of £1.3 million.

Derek Fox, who until recently was the Department of the Environment's advisor on Housing Management, has said that "the Local Authority housing maintenance service has a poor image and consumer confidence is low". That is a fancy way of saying that tenants get a bit up-tight at having to wait two months to have a drain unblocked or at watching their window frames rot out of the wall while waiting for council workmen to come along and give them their once-every-five-year coat of paint.

Because repair and maintenance work is usually done in a haphazard, hand-to-mouth way few councils would be able to say exactly how efficient they really are. However Mr Graham, a Director of Maintenance at the Greater London Council, has done just that.

He said that the GLC paint the outside of their properties every three years and a year before they are painted extensive repairs are carried out.

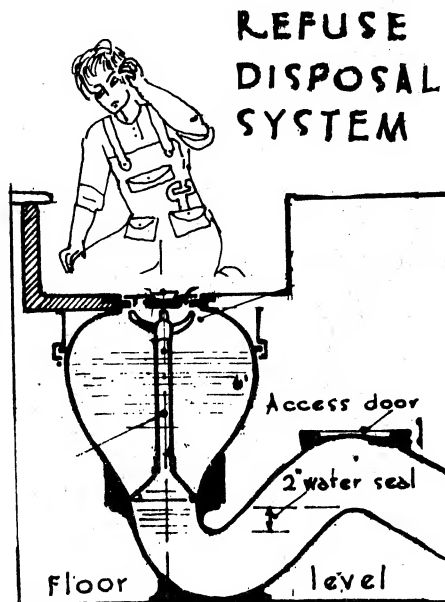
Multi-storey blocks are inspected at regular intervals. This is because on a random inspection in the past it was discovered that pieces of concrete weighing three-and-a-half tons was about to fall off fairly new property.

He also gave what he thought were satisfactory standards for day-to-day repairs. Bricklayers repairs should be carried out within 5 weeks, carpenters work in 4 weeks and plumbers work in 3 weeks. He said that most electrical work and ground floor breakages affecting security were treated as emergencies.

Mr Graham made this statement in November 1972 and he claimed that at the time standards were generally being kept; though he was honest enough to admit that there is always the odd one that

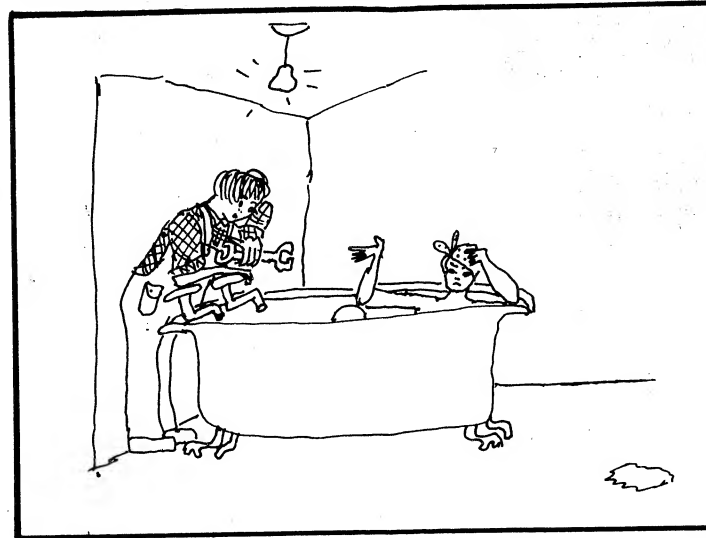
gets away.

The two estates we surveyed were both Hackney Council estates, but as there are many thousands of GLC tenants in the Borough we would be interested to hear if their experiences tally with Mr Graham's analysis; or do they think that they may have tended to be the ones that get away?



## THE SURVEY

WE ASKED TENANTS on two Hackney Council Estates about the sort of repair problems they had had and of their experiences with the Council's maintenance service. We talked to about a dozen tenants on each estate, so we make no claims that our survey has any statistical validity. Nevertheless to get a reasonably fair picture we visited the De Beauvoir Estate, which is one of the newest Hackney Estates and then Stonebridge, which was built just after the war.



### De Beauvoir

THE BLOCK we surveyed was the most recently completed on the estate. Most of the tenants we talked to had moved in about four years ago.

The main problem concerned the sink wastes which were fitted with rubbish disposal units. By this system household refuse is put into a cast-iron receiver which is fitted into an enlarged bowl beneath the sink. The refuse is carried away through a down-pipe into a large collection tank which should be emptied at regular intervals.

Although this system has a number of points in its favour the experience of most Local Authorities who have used them has been that the headaches they cause tend to out-weigh the advantages.

One lady who we interviewed explained that her sink waste had been blocked three times since she moved in last August. On one of these occasions it had taken six weeks for council workmen to come down and unblock it. During this time she had had to put up with the stench of decomposing refuse coming back up into her kitchen.

Although this tenants six week wait was the longest of those we interviewed, most of the tenants we spoke to had had trouble with these units. The manufacturers state that the main reason for trouble with the system is by tenants putting oversize rubbish in it; but two of the tenants we spoke to said the blockage had been caused by the Council men not emptying the drains often enough. This would seem quite feasible in view of the fact that on several occasions all the units on the estate were blocked.

The sink-wastes apart, the overall repair picture was fairly good as it should have been on such a new estate. A number of tenants said that they had had no major problems. The lady who had had to wait six weeks for her sink to be unblocked, also

said that she had had minor problems with door handles and window catches that the Council had fixed within a few days.

But there were quite a few tenants who were far from satisfied with the service that they had received. Their experiences included a cracked toilet bowl that had not been seen to since the tenant had moved in over three years ago, two and three month delays on fixing water-heaters, and delays ranging from three months to a year in repairing or replacing doors.

When one tenant had a new door put on over a year ago he was told that some people would be down to paint it within the week; he is still waiting.

A number of tenants told us that the only thing the Council worried about was the rent.

Hackney Council has good reason to worry about rent. At £500,000 its rent arrears are among the highest in London. In contrast, Newham Council, with 5,000 more properties to look after, has only £295,000 owing to it.

There could be a number of reasons for Hackney's high rent arrears. But one very good reason why people stop paying is because repairs don't get done.

### Stonebridge

STONEBRIDGE is a shabby, depressing estate. During our visit the air was filled with the stench of an overflowing drain in the main courtyard. Almost everyone we spoke to was on the transfer list. A few had been on it for more than 10 years.

Plumbing was the main source of trouble. The first tenant we spoke to was an old age pensioner. She had lived on Stonebridge for 9 years the last 7 without hot water due to a leaking water tank. It is possible this lady wasn't able to fight a long battle with the Council to get what she was entitled to. For instance she did her own decorating and hadn't reported a faulty WC cistern. But the disbanding of residential caretakers must make it more difficult for tenants who can't get about easily to register their complaints, and practically impossible for them to keep following up if nothing is done.



Another tenant we spoke to had had his fair share of tussles with the Council. When he moved in just under a year ago he had no hot water in his bathroom. Half a dozen visits from Council plumbers later, he still had barely more than a trickle with the tap full on. He had now been told that the whole system needed overhauling. He had also tried in vain to get a hand basin installed. One consolation was that he would soon be eligible for the transfer list.

Damp was another common problem. On the top floor it was so bad that some of the tenants had to completely redecorate their flats every year.

One question we asked on both estates was whether there was any justification to the comment that Council tenants make things worse by reporting minor problems. The response of the lady who did her own decorating was typical: "Not really! It takes so long for them to come, it's better to do it yourself."

Of course, the problems on estates like Stonebridge go far deeper than a clapped out plumbing system. But until these places are consigned to the dustbin of history, it's things like stinking drains and leaky ball-valves that make life unbearable.





## the world of property

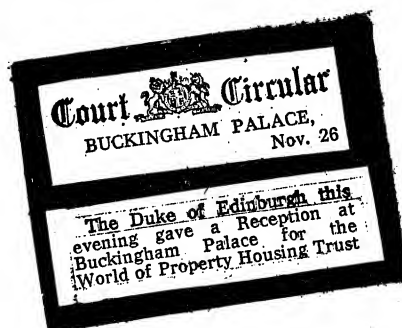
Hackney Council has been asked to lend £10½ million to a housing association called the World of Property Housing Trust. The association wants to spend this enormous sum of money buying up a chunk of land near Victoria Park, at present owned by the Sir John Cass Foundation, and housing about 500 people. The association would then 'improve' the houses, offering control of less than half to the Council.

Local people should be naturally wary of any Council support for housing associations on this scale. The thinking behind what is often called the 'third arm' of the housing movement is that there should be something in between Council housing and the private landlord. But housing associations merely direct money and energy away from public housing, encourage the worst attitudes of charitable 'do-gooding', are even less open to democratic criticism than the Council, and often charge higher rents. Many are controlled by professionals like architects, surveyors, solicitors, estate agents, whose self-interest is obvious.

The World of Property Housing Trust is no exception. As its name suggests, it is closely connected with property development. Until recently, the chairman was Gabriel Harrison, boss of Amalgamated Investment and Property, one of the country's largest property companies. Other names on the board of management are: Alastair McAlpine, partner in Sir Robert McAlpine, the construction

firm; Victor Lucas, President of the British Property Federation; Andrew Wates, from the Wates building company; Peter Anker, managing director of the Metropolitan Estate and Property Corporation; and Roy Symmons, consultant to Hackney's own Donaldson's estate agents.

The whole thing was started up in 1969 by none other than Tory barrister Francis Benyon, best known for his prosecution of Young Liberal Peter Hain, who tried to upset the South African rugby tour. Strange bedfellows, you might feel, for a Labour-controlled Council.



This is not the first deal WPHT has planned with a London borough council. It is responsible for the housing part of the massive Wood Green shopping centre, for instance, and is said to have a national development programme of tens of millions of pounds.

But the tenants of Pimlico, near Victoria station, will not remember the arrival of WPHT with relish. After years of fighting, people living in a triangle of properties managed to get the government to give the local Council (Westminster) the money to buy up their homes - and eventually improve them. They were therefore somewhat surprised when the whole lot was re-sold to World of Property earlier this year. The Trust had had no prev-

ious dealings with Westminster Council, and was not on its approved list of housing associations. The tenants are now worried that WPHT's rents will be much higher than the Council's, and that Westminster has no right to nominate tenants from the waiting list. Hackney tenants, be warned!

## family forced to squat

Yet another horror story from the log book of homelessness.

Until two weeks ago, Mrs. Geraldine Evans, her husband and two children (aged 1 and 3½) lived at 117, Gibson Gardens, N16, a privately rented flat. Their two rooms and kitchen were so damp that the baby suffered from bronchitis. There were mice running around, bugs in the beds, no hot water or bathroom, and the only toilet was in the kitchen.

'It was absolutely disgusting,' Mrs. Evans told us. 'My husband had split up with me before because of the conditions.'

A public health inspector from Hackney Council had taken out 11 separate summonses against the Evans' landlord, but defects repaired by builders had just come back again. Because of the state of the flat, the Evans refused to pay rent, although they were not even sure who their landlord was. They were on both Hackney Council and the GLC's

DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH &  
SOCIAL  
SECURITY**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
MONDAY to FRIDAY 100-40



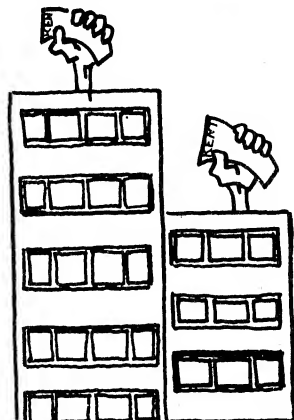
waiting list, as well as those of two housing associations.

Two weeks ago, the family decided that had had enough, and went to Hackney Town Hall, where Mrs. Evans dumped her two kids in protest. They were later returned by the police, who agreed that the conditions they were living in were unsuitable, but told the family to go to the Social Services department.



The next day, Mrs. Evans duly visited the Social Services office in Kingsland Road. The reception from a social worker was none too helpful. Mrs. Evans was firstly given a lecture on the dangers of allowing her children to be taken into care, then told that other people lived in far worse conditions, and finally told that Social Services could do nothing anyway because the family had left their flat of their own accord. She was redirected to the Housing Advice Centre in Mare Street.

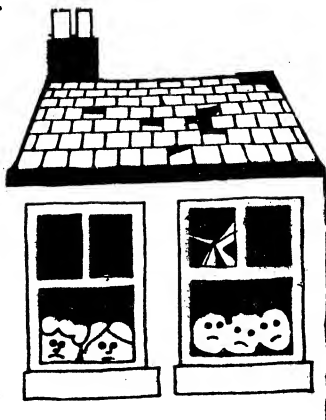
The Advice Centre could do nothing, although the Evans say they are on the priority part of the waiting list, and they were told to go back to Social Services. The second time round was even less productive. The same social worker told Mrs. Evans to go to Centerprise and get a Squatters Handbook. Centerprise had no copies of this book, and the family was referred elsewhere.



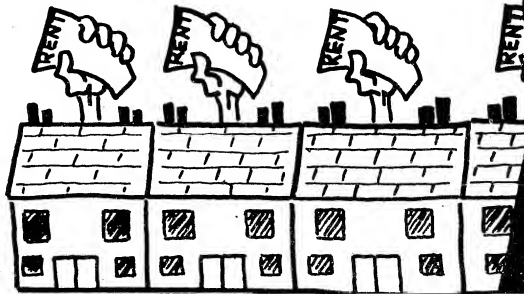
The Evans family is indeed now squatting, although no thanks to Hackney Social Services. Mrs. Evans told us: 'It was a terrible thing to do, dumping the children. But we couldn't stand it any more. The Social Services just didn't want to know. For all they know, we could be still out walking the streets.'

## unhealthy kingsmead

The GLC has promised yet again that it will 'definitely' go ahead with its planned improvements on the Kingsmead estate in Homerton. Meanwhile, HPP has come across one small example of how the local authorities avoid having to deal with bad housing conditions.

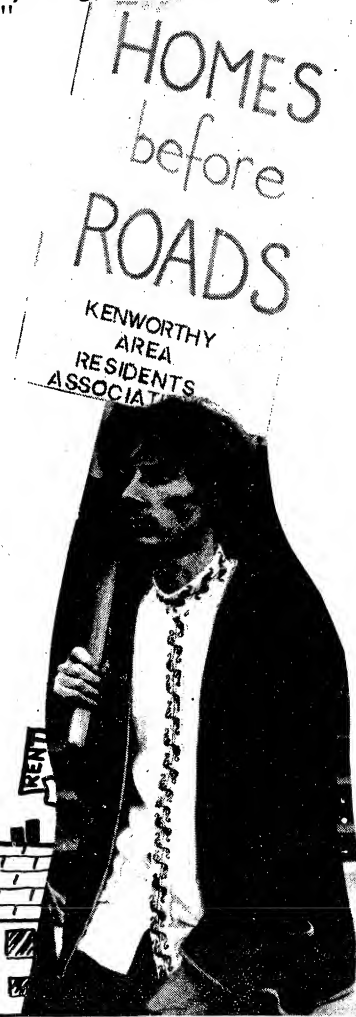


Until recently, Mrs. Pierre and her family lived on Kingsmead in what the 1957 Housing Act would call a state of 'statutory overcrowding'. Through a local community worker, her case was taken up by the tenants' association, and a visit made by a public health inspector from Hackney Borough Council.



After some time, having heard nothing, the community worker phoned the Public Health department (now grandly retitled Environmental Health). The inspector first said that the family was not what he would describe as in a state of 'penal overcrowding', since it was all due to 'natural increase', that is having children. But he then added that no action would be taken anyway because Hackney Council had an 'arrangement' with the GLC whereby the borough would not start prosecutions against it. So whatever the law might say, Mrs. Pierre would have to lump it.

This is not a totally isolated example. A similar response from the Public Health department greeted a previous case on Kingsmead when a tenant complained about black mould on the walls. Again, the answer was first 'it's not damp, it's condensation' and then 'we won't do anything, because it's the GLC.'



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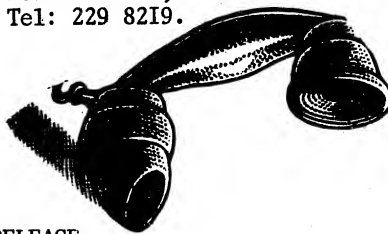
# IN BRIEF

## HAVE YOU PAID YOUR CLAP TAX?

CLAP, the Community Levy for Alternative Projects, is a tax on up to 4% of your gross income - minimum £1 every two months - and up to 100% of your unearned income, inheritances, windfalls et al. If you have any kind of income, please do not avoid paying this alternative tax. How else are we going to help build up and sustain a network of alternative structures for the sane transformation of society?

Send 14½p in stamps for the CLAP Handbook which is a good read in its own right - if you wish, you then choose which of the projects described to support.

CLAP, c/o BIT Free Information and Help Service, 146, Great Western Road, London W.11.  
Tel: 229 8219.



## RELEASE

I, Elgin Avenue, London W9. Help and legal advice service. Open Monday to Friday (10 - 6). Open late Mondays and Thursdays with solicitors and doctors on the premises.

Emergency 24-hour telephone service : 603 8654.

Release is also about to publish a new version of the Truckers' Bible, a guide to dope laws throughout the world, called Justanothertruckstop. Mail order from Release, price 50p, 10p for post and package.

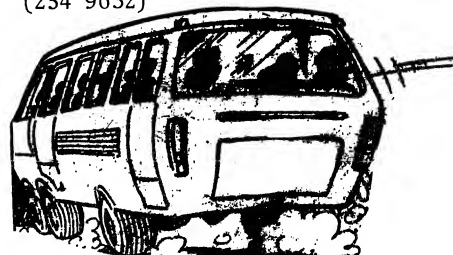
## DOES YOUR PROJECT NEED MONEY?

If its community-based, imaginative, evolutionary or whatever, send for details of how to apply.

← (See CLAP opposite)

## OFFICES

Mansford Street Unitarian Church has four furnished offices available at a very reasonable rent. They are particularly sympathetic to community groups. Mansford Street is off Hackney Road. Enquiries to Roger at Centerprise (254 9632)



## HACKNEY PLAYBUS

Mobile converted bus with play facilities for about 15 children. Details from Pauline Weinstein (806 3085).

# HPP

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS is in desperate need of workers.

At the moment the paper is put together by a handful of people, who do everything. Collect the articles together. Type them out. Do the laying out and design. Get the photographs. Collate the papers once they're printed. Distribute them to newsagents, estates etc. around the borough.

We're not asking for a medal for doing all that. But we're just wondering whether there aren't some others out there who think there ought to be an alternative newspaper for Hackney. Who are involved in activities that could benefit from publicity. Who think that there are things wrong that ought to be exposed.

Maybe you don't like the paper as it is now. Maybe you think it could be better. We accept that there are plenty of criticisms to be made. But we still think there is the basis of a really good voice for people who are struggling to change things in Hackney.

If you feel the same, then either write to HPP c/o Centerprise, 136, Kingsland High Street, E8 or phone 986-3075.

# inform- 13 ation

## PLAYS

THEATRE ROYAL, STRATFORD.

Angel Lane, E.15. (534 0310)

From 17 July:

"Look out - it's Sir" by Stephen Lewis. Songs by Alan Klein.

Directed by Victor Spinetti.

Evenings at 8pm. Saturdays at 5pm and 8pm. Seats from 30p-£1.50.

from Tuesday 22 July:

Monday-Friday at 11am.

"Arf-a-loaf". Songs, jokes, games and music. Daily show for young people.

5p daily -- season ticket 50p.

Sunday cabaret - every Sunday - £1.

UNITY THEATRE

1 Goldington Street, NW1. (387 8647)

10-20 July: "Lay Off" by John McGrath. Music by Mark Brown.

Presented by the 7:84 Theatre Co. evenings at 7.45pm.

From 25 July: "Stop Press".

British premiere of a Romanian comedy by Mihail Sebastian. evenings at 7.45pm.

Every Wednesday: Unity Theatre Folk club.

HALF MOON THEATRE

27 Alie Street, E.1. (480 6465)

From 31 July: "Hatchet" by

Heno Magee. One of the most powerful plays to come out of Ireland in recent years.

Evenings at 8pm.



No.198, Evering Road (above) has been empty about a year and a half. Water pours down the back wall, the inside of the house has been vandalised, and the front garden is piled high with rubbish.

When a neighbour decided to complain about the danger to children playing in the house, he discovered that the owners were the Second Actel Housing Association. Mr.Durrant, a director of Second Actel, said that they had been unable to start work on the house 'because of difficulty with builders.' After further complaints, the house has now been boarded up, although this is not very effective.

Regular observers of the Hackney housing scene will remember that Second Actel was the centre of criticism several years ago because its directors were said to be creaming off money for their own purposes (that is, as architects, surveyors etc.) Two of the directors later resigned.

According to current records, Second Actel's offices are at 5, Downs Road, and it has 30 tenants. It also gets a grant from the borough council. An enquiry to the borough rating department suggested that this was not the only house owned by the association to be left empty.

## SHOREDITCH PARK ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

### SUMMER FESTIVAL

Sat. July 19th 1p.m.

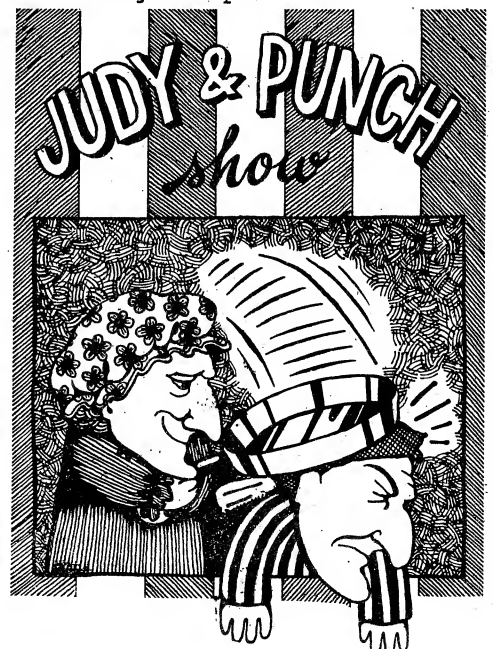
Steel Band, Youth Club Scene, Ignition Poets, Tug-o-War, Morris Dancers.....

Followed by an ALL-NIGHT LIVE AND RECORDED MUSIC SPECTACULAR. Discotheques by Lenny, Center-tainments and Dance Machine.

Sun. July 20th 2p.m.

FREEDOM CONCERT featuring:

Azimuth, Long John Baldry, Keith and Judy Tippett, (with Ovary Lodge), Megalopis, Seeds of the Earth, Silent Sister....





# 14 information

## GROUPS

### HACKNEY GINGERBREAD

Group for one-parent families: this means single fathers too! Meets every Monday at 34 Dalston Lane E8 at 7.30pm. Further information from Gloria Sullivan, 254 8405.

### FRIENDS ANONYMOUS SERVICE

Friendship House, 27 Hackney Grove, E8. Provides a 24 hour telephone service, with people always ready to listen and act.  
986 2233 (24 hours)  
985 0973  
985 9146 (office hours)

### SOUTH STOKE NEWINGTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

54 Harcombe Road, N16. People in this area concerned about poor transport, badly planned redevelopment, rubbish and dumped cars, empty houses and nowhere for kids to play. Contact them if you feel the same.

### HACKNEY PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION

34 Dalston Lane E8. 254 1620  
Advice service Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10.30-4.00 with free advice on pensions, supplementary benefits, welfare rights, housing.  
Tea bar: Monday-Friday 10.30-4.00.  
July 22nd: Social afternoon and chat. July 24th: Open meeting 2.00 pm. July 26th: Jumble sale 2-4 pm.

### HARAMBEE II PROJECT

Upper Clapton Congregational Hall, E5. Social and advice centre, aimed particularly at young black people  
Open Tuesdays 10am-10pm  
Thursdays 10am-4.30pm  
Fridays 10am-10pm

### OFF CENTRE

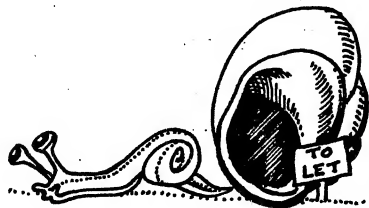
Advice centre for young people between 13 and 25 with any problems. 25 Hackney Grove E8. Open Monday-Friday from 10am-6pm. (Tuesdays till 8.30pm.) Tel.: 985 8566

### MENTAL PATIENTS UNION

Robin Farquarson House, 37 Mayola Road, E5. 986 5251. Meets every Saturday, 7pm. All mental and ex-mental patients welcome.

### AFTER SIX

24 hour information service, with advice especially for the single homeless and couples without children (who don't come within the range of local authority help.)  
Telephone 836 6534. Emergencies only after 9pm and on Sundays.



### HACKNEY UNITED TENANTS ASSOCIATION

Information from 22, Stoke Newington Common, N16.

### GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS

Twenty-four hour help service. Ring 352 3060.

### FINSBURY PARK COMMUNITY GROUP

Tackles problems and needs of the Finsbury Park area. Runs neighbour schemes and a community garden. Contact Sarah Guthrie (359 3141).

### HACKNEY PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACTION COMMITTEE

Contact Richard Gee, 60, Glenarm Road, E5.

### TASK FORCE

34, Dalston Lane, E8. (254 1620)  
Help service for old people plus other schemes.

## FOOD

### DOWN TO EARTH

Durham Row, Stepney Green, E1. 790 3512  
Wholefood shop selling grains, flour, beans, oil, honey, herbs etc. Open Mon-Sat 9am-6pm.



## MEETINGS

### HACKNEY YOUNG SOCIALISTS

Hackney South and Shoreditch. Meets every Wednesday at 34 Dalston Lane. Contact Andy Hall, 85 Goldsmiths Row, E2, 985 1290, for details.  
Hackney Central. Meets every Tuesday at 8pm at 34 Dalston Lane. Contact Kathy Gelb, 6 Abersham Road, E8 for details.  
Hackney North. Meets every other Monday at 8pm at 5 Stamford Hill, N16. Contact Mark Douglas, 10 Osbaldeston Road, N16 for details.  
Everybody welcome at all meetings.

### SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Meets second Thursday of each month at Centerprise.

### HACKNEY COMMITTEE AGAINST RACIALISM

Meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the Hackney Community Relations Council in Mare Street, E8. Organisational or individual membership welcome at £1.00 per year.

### HACKNEY YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE

Meets every Tuesday, 8.00 pm at Centerprise. For more information contact E. Ross (986 5767).

## HEALTH

### "PREPARATION FOR PARENTHOOD" CLASSES.

For all expectant parents living in City and Hackney district. Tuesdays 6-8pm at Shoreditch Health Centre, 210 Kingsland Road, E8 and Thursdays 10am-12 noon at John Scott Health Centre, Woodberry Down, Green Lanes, N4. No appointment necessary and expectant fathers welcome.

### CITY AND HACKNEY COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

Takes up criticisms of local health services. Open 10.00-5pm Monday to Friday (until 8.00pm on Tuesdays). Based at Shoreditch Health Centre, 210, Kingsland Rd (near St. Leonards Hospital). Phone 739 6308.

## CENTERPRISE

### CENTERPRISE

136 Kingsland High Street E8.  
254 9632/3/4/5  
Coffee bar open Mondays, 1pm to 6.30pm. Tuesday-Friday, 10am to 10pm and Saturday, 10am to 6.30pm. Bookshop opens at the same times, but closes at 6.30pm each day.

Other facilities and projects include:

Centerprise Publishing Project.  
If you are interested in getting a book or pamphlet published, contact Ken Worpole.

Learning Exchange.  
Free exchange centre, putting people who want to learn in contact with those who have offered to teach.

Silkscreen workshop.  
Facilities for posters etc. Run by Jim at 81 Lenthal Road, E8. Phone Jim through Centerprise, or speak to Harriet.

Photocopying and duplicating facilities are also available.

### Four O'Clock Club.

Play activities (painting, sewing etc.) for 7-11 age group. Tuesdays and Thursdays (4-6 pm) during school terms only.

### Reading Centre

For adults who can't read or write. Full-time courses expected to start in September.



## HELP!

### FLAT WANTED

Young mother and five-year-old child seek flat urgently. Stoke Newington area preferred. Write c/o Hackney Peoples Press.

## WOMEN

### HACKNEY WOMENS AID

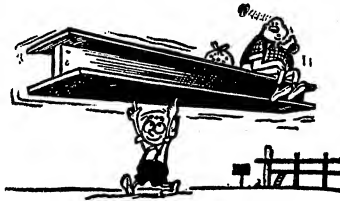
All women welcome -- meets every Thursday at 5.30pm. Details from 254 7504.

### HACKNEY TRADES COUNCIL WOMENS SUB COMMITTEE

Interested in equal pay and opportunities? Good working conditions? Comprehensive nursery system? Maternity leave and pay? Contraception and abortion? Meets second Tuesday every month at Centerprise. All welcome.

### HACKNEY ABORTION CAMPAIGN

Regular meetings every fortnight. Ring 986 3075 for details or contact 42, Kynaston Road, N16.



## CHILDREN

### PLAYGROUNDS

Hackney Marsh (986 7245)  
Shoreditch Park (739 0036)

### CHILDMINDERS

Hackney Childminders are making a video film about childminding. More info. from Madge (249 5158).

### HACKNEY UNDER FIVES COMMITTEE

Enquiries to Liz Chambers, 36, Colvestone Crescent, E8 (254 4208)  
A guide to services and facilities for under fives is available at 5p. The Pied Piper newspaper is full of information for parents about playgroups, nurseries etc. It costs 5p from Centerprise.

### CENTERPRISE SUMMER PLAYScheme

July 8th-August 22nd. For 7-12 year olds. Day outings to special places (twice a week), activities in the basement, visits to local parks, swimming etc. Contact Centerprise.

### HOXTON HALL SUMMER PLAYScheme

Painting, games, crafts, pottery, outings, resident theatre group. Details from 739 5431. Also see page 2.

## ADVICE

### MANOR ROAD COUNSELLING CENTRE

Free expert advice in confidence on legal, financial, family/welfare and other matters. Information and help on housing, social security, personal problems. Wednesdays 7.00-8.30 pm in the Church Hall, Manor Road, N16 (by Manor Road/Lordship Road traffic lights, 106 bus).

### CENTERPRISE ADVICE CENTRE

Advice on housing problems, legal social security. Thursdays 6.30-8.00 pm at Centerprise, 136, Kingsland High St, E8.

### NORTH HACKNEY LABOUR PARTY

ADVICE CENTRE. 5 Stamford Hill, N.16. Gives advice on tenants problems, especially harassment and repairs. Fridays 7pm-8pm.



# 16 WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO

## OUR SONGS?

**hackney**

**music**

## workshop

Music makes money. The star system produces glamorous performers on the one hand and passive consumers on the other. It's not just that the music industry is a business, ruled by profit - the star system corrupts everybody learning or creating music. The motivation for learning or making up music is too often dreams of fame or fortune, not creating something for our friends, work-mates and comrades to express the realities of our lives.

We think it's important to build up the confidence, the ability and the contexts in which we can start to make culture and not just consume it. We want to put our music in a political context, to begin to build a genuine people's culture in which we can all actively participate.

The Music Workshop grew out of the WEA pop history course run in a Hackney pub in the spring of 1973, which led to the local audience's request for practical music workshop sessions. These were held weekly in Hoxton Hall and ran from June 1973 to June 1974. The aim was always for people to extend their insight into the pop and folk culture, and how different forms of music link up historically, so as to encourage contemporary use of these forms.

The workshop was successful in numbers but it soon became apparent that some members wanted to study origins of songs and music in depth, others wanted to compose and write songs relating



directly to their own cultural and social experience, and yet others wanted to learn to play different instruments. Some were predominantly interested in Jazz, others in Folk or Blues, others in contemporary pop or classical styles. We found that it was impossible to accommodate for this wide range of interests and so the workshop folded in June 1974.

### WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN AT THIS CLUB

....a combination of singing and playing with talking, discussions and drinking.

#### Structure

- 1) Singer talks about his songs, his feelings, origins and politics of songs - then discussion could follow.
- 2) Singers could get together for one or more songs and work out various accompaniments - then several of them could do the same song, compare differences and similarities etc.
- 3) How can you project feelings through instrumentals?

#### Workshops

- 1) Technique (a) instruments (b) singing
- 2) History (a) songs (b) musical culture
- 3) Musical consciousness raising; discussion of personal feelings towards songs.
- 4) Songswaps.

We don't want this to be a traditional "folk club" but a basis for relationships between people who want to sing, talk, learn and play together.

*Hackney Music Workshop.  
Every Tuesday 7.30 p.m. at the  
Duke of Wellington, Balla Pond Rd.  
Information: 226-2724 or 249-2353*

## folk club

The Folk Club at Centerprise has been going about six weeks now. In that time we've built up a small, regular audience and an expanding number of resident performers.

Evenings of entertainment have been alternated with evenings of a slightly more educational nature, based on an illustrated talk. We felt that a look at the roots of folk music would be an interesting and worthwhile venture. To date we've had a talk on the English Carol and one on the Folk Revival, each illustrated in an entertaining way by songs and records. These evenings have been anything but dry.

We've also had some fine musicians and singers - Leon Roselson has been, also Combine. And we always welcome singers from the floor (free admission if you sing for the first six, admission refundable to any others who sing in an evening). You're welcome any Wednesday whether there's a talk or not.

We're not licensed but you're welcome to bring a bottle, and our coffee bar is open upstairs until 10pm. We have to make a charge in order to pay our guests but we try to keep admission as low as possible.

*Folk at Centerprise. Weds. 8-11p.m.  
Admission: members 25p, guests 40p  
Membership 50p a year.*

Below is what's happening until the end of July. We'll be closed in August and re-open in September, when we'll be having evenings of Caribbean music, music hall songs, blues and much more besides.

July 23rd: Frankie Armstrong, fine, dramatic, traditional singer talks on 'Women in folk-song'.

July 30th: Bonnie Shaljean, formerly associated with Ignition Poets. She sings traditional and contemporary songs, plays early English music on the harp, and more besides.